

Opening Statement  
**Chairman Michael G. Oxley**  
**Committee on Financial Services**

**Subcommittee on Capital Markets, Insurance and Government-Sponsored  
Enterprises**  
**“The Enron Matter”**

**February 4, 2002**

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Our Committee began its work on the Enron collapse with our first hearing over a month and a half ago, in mid-December 2001. Today and tomorrow, we continue our review of Enron and its impact on investors, employees, and the financial markets.

We on this Committee are working to achieve three goals:

- *First*, making sure the Congress knows how the biggest corporate collapse in American history happened;
- *Second*, restoring the confidence of investors in accounting, regulators and the rules governing our markets; and
- *Third*, making sure that the free market system, and the regulatory system that underpins it, emerge stronger and better as a result of our work.

This Committee oversees the financial and capital markets. We oversee the regulation of those markets. So we have a fundamental responsibility here. We take our work very seriously, and we're committed to doing it right.

We are working hard, but we're not working alone. We are working closely with the major investigators -- the Justice Department, the SEC, and Enron's and Andersen's own internal teams. We greatly appreciate their active assistance and cooperation, and their insights. We will make sure that our work complements theirs, and does nothing to impede it.

I also am gratified that the President, in his State of the Union address, told us to make our work here a top priority. The President believes -- and I agree -- that “corporate America must be made more accountable to employees and shareholders and held to the highest standards of conduct.” That's exactly where we, as a Committee, are headed.

There's been a lot of talk from a lot of people about what might have happened at Enron. But Congress and the American people deserve to know the facts directly -- and from those who are most directly involved.

That's what is going to happen today and tomorrow.

We have with us three of the people most directly involved:

- The chief securities regulator, SEC Chairman Harvey Pitt;
- Enron's chief internal investigator, Mr. William Powers;
- The company's outside auditors, Mr. Joe Berardino of Arthur Andersen.

We thank them all for being so willing to be here. Everyone should know that they all wanted to come here and testify, although these are very difficult circumstances for them.

Congress's job is different from those of the judges, juries, and prosecutors who will deal with the many individual instances of wrongdoing. Our job is not to convict, prosecute, or persecute. Our job is to understand what happened, address the problems, and make our free market system better and more impregnable than before. I think I speak for all my colleagues in saying that we're committed to that goal, and will be working hard -- together -- to achieve it in the weeks and months ahead.

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